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UNCLAS SANAA 001473

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

NEA/ARP FOR AMACDONALD; DRL FOR JBARGHOUT/JKERN

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [KIRF](#) [PGOV](#) [YM](#)
SUBJECT: DEPORTATION STILL FEARED FOR THE BAHĀ'IS

REF: SANAA 1441

¶1. (SBU) As of September 3, the four imprisoned Bahā'is (reftel) remain detained and face possible deportation. According to their lawyer, Khaled al-Anisi, the ROYG has now unofficially agreed that they may choose the country to which they will be deported.

¶2. (SBU) On August 31, the Charge d'Affaires once again urged Foreign Minister Abu-Bakr al-Qirbi to not deport the Bahā'is and passed along information explaining the threat of persecution Bahā'is face in Iran. Qirbi said the Bahā'is had overstayed their visas and may thus be deported. (Note: The Bahā'i community asserts that all four detained Bahā'is have valid visas. End Note). Qirbi also asked if the USG would be willing to accept the detained Bahā'is. The CDA made no promises, but urged that the ROYG avoid making a hasty decision while we explored this option.

¶3. (SBU) On September 2, UNHCR-Yemen representative Samer Haddadin told Poloff that, despite numerous attempts to visit the detainees, UNHCR has been refused access. Family members and other Bahā'is, however, reported to Poloff on September 2 that they have been granted visitation in recent days. On September 2, ICRC-Yemen country director Marcus Dolder reported to CDA that ICRC has yet to be contacted by their headquarters on the issue. Dolder added that they have not attempted to gain access to the imprisoned Bahā'is, but is sure that they would be denied if they attempted to do so because ICRC has not had access to prisoners in Yemen since 2004 and assumes that the ROYG would say that Embassies representing the detained have jurisdiction over them (despite the fear of persecution).

¶4. (SBU) Comment: Post has been in contact with PRM to determine possible procedures for US resettlement, should this become necessary. Post continues, in the meantime, to lobby the government against deportation. End Comment.

BRYAN